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SUBJECT: Suriname: 2009-2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) Part 1, Drugs and Chemical Control

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11. (U) Post presents its 2009-2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) Part I, Drugs and Chemical Control.

Suriname

II. Summary

Suriname is a transit zone for South American cocaine en route to Europe, Africa and, to a lesser extent, the United States. The Government of Suriname (GOS) does not have the capacity to adequately control its borders. Inadequate resources, limited law enforcement training, the absence of a law enforcement presence in the interior of the country, and lack of aircraft or sufficient numbers of patrol boats, permit traffickers to move drug shipments via land, water, and air with little resistance. In 2009, the GOS undertook law enforcement and legal measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish narcotics trafficking and related corruption, yielding success in several high profile cases. The GOS conducted Operation Koetai, an unprecedented anti-narcotics trafficking operation focused on the western border with Guyana. The GOS also cracked down on internal corruption after cocaine went missing from a police vault. The international press reported on Suriname after Italian law enforcement dismantled a drug ring transshipping heroin and cocaine via Suriname and other South American countries to Italy. Suriname is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, but has not implemented legislation regarding precursor chemical control provisions to bring itself into full conformity with the Convention.

II. Status of Country

The GOS ability to identify, apprehend, and prosecute narcotics traffickers is inhibited by its chronic lack of resources, limited law enforcement capabilities, inadequate legislation, drug-related corruption of the police and military, a complicated and time-consuming bureaucracy, and overburdened and under-resourced courts. Cocaine from South America, primarily destined for Europe, is transshipped through Suriname (sometimes via Africa or other South American countries). Cocaine bound for the Caribbean, and ultimately the United States, is also transshipped through Suriname. Long-standing allegations that a drugs-for-weapons trade takes place on Surinamese soil re-surfaced in the press when the Guyanese Anti-Narcotics Division (CANU) was quoted as stating that one kilo of cocaine trades for two Chinese AK-47s in Suriname. There is local production of marijuana, as well as marijuana smuggled into Suriname from Guyana.

The GOS has no legislation controlling precursor chemicals and no tracking system to monitor them. This leaves the GOS unable to detect the diversion of precursor chemicals for drug production. However, in 2008, Suriname participated in a training seminar with Colombian counterparts and experts to learn how to identify precursor chemicals. A follow-up training, with Dutch technical support, is planned for 2010.

III. Country Actions against Drugs in 2009

Policy Initiatives. The National Anti-Drug Council (NAR) and its Executive Office renewed its mandate from the Ministry of Health in June 2008 to continue to coordinate implementation of the National Drug Master Plan (2006-2010) that covers both supply and demand reduction and includes calls for new legislation to control precursor chemicals. The National Drug Master Plan is supported by both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice and Police. Since 2007, the GOS has broadened support by involving Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society in the implementation of the plan, and incorporating business associations, religious groups, and the NAR's regional sites. The GOS has made progress in the implementation of the Master Plan, which has four main pillars. The first, national coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the National Drug Master Plan, showed significant progress with the strengthening of the NAR and its Executive Office. The NAR receives its operational budget from the Ministry of Health's central budget and does not have an annual programmatic budget. The Master Plan's second pillar is the development and implementation of relevant legislation with regard to the fight against drugs and drug-related crime. The GOS has not yet started to draft the legislation on precursor chemicals, but its request to the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) of the Organization of American States (OAS) for technical assistance and training for drafting the precursor chemicals legislation was approved in 2009 and will commence in 2010. Draft legislation on terrorist financing, which is required for Suriname

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to join the Egmont Group, remains pending. Pillar three is the fight against drug trafficking and maintenance of law and order. Progress was made in this area in 2009 when the Unusual Transactions Reporting Center (MOT/FIU) resolved its staffing shortage and the government created a Financial Investigation Team (FOT). The fourth pillar is drug demand reduction and strengthening of addiction care. The NAR reported significant progress in this area, especially through a European Union-funded demand reduction program which was completed in 2007. In 2009, the NAR conducted its first evaluation of treatment centers after the 2007 adoption by the Ministry of Health of minimum standards. In 2010, the NAR will draft the National Drug Master Plan (2011-2015) using data from a 2005 Rapid Situation Assessment (RSA), a 2004 school survey, and a 2007 household survey to inform the process.

In January 2009, the media reported a new policy that all parole requests for offenders in serious drug cases would be denied. A former top military official convicted of MDMA (Ecstasy) production and export filed suit against the GOS after being turned down for parole in 2009 after serving five years of his sentence.

The NAR is working within the CICAD and European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) collaboration framework to set up a Drug Treatment Court, which would specialize in hearing defendants charged with drug use and drug-related criminal offenses. The judge would have the authority to have addicts undergo mandatory rehabilitation rather than enter the regular prison system. In October 2009, The Ministry of Justice and Police launched a two-day exchange workshop with Paramaribo's partner city (Ghent, Belgium) to engage in the planning. The pilot program for the Drug Treatment Court is slated to begin in 2010 after government amends the existing legal structure.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Through October 30, 2009, the GOS seized 238.2 kg of cocaine, 158.5 kg of cannabis, 4,711.2 grams of hash, and 5.8 grams of heroin. This was an increase in seizures for all drug types, compared to 2008 numbers. In 2009, no MDMA tablets were seized, in comparison to 785 tablets in 2008. As of October 30, 454 people were arrested for drug-related offenses of which 323 cases were sent to the Office of the Attorney General for prosecution. As of November 5, 293 people had been prosecuted for drug-related offenses. The GOS Ministry of Justice and Police and law enforcement institutions' continued targeting of large trafficking rings (with direct links to South American, African,

and European rings) and its expanding cooperation with regional and international partners could yield improved results. The continuing GOS crackdown against clandestine airstrips within Suriname has continued to force traffickers to develop new routes and methods for transiting drugs. The drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) have moved their landing strips further into the interior and changed trafficking tactics, such as using one landing strip for a very short period of time and then moving to another strip. In October 2009, police arrested seven suspects at an illegal landing strip that were allegedly preparing for the landing of an aircraft bearing illicit drugs. The Johan Adolf Pengel International (JAP) Airport has plans in place to introduce radar capabilities in the near future. There is an increased prevalence in the use of go-fast boats to transport narcotics from Venezuela and Guyana. The GOS performed Operation Koetai in the second half of 2009, which focused on narcotics interdiction on Suriname's western border with Guyana. This operation has resulted in 16.6 kilos of cocaine seized and 1 arrest as of October 30, 2009. Narcotics traffickers attempting to bypass Operation Koetai landed their boats in Saramacca, but were also apprehended by the police. The police arrested seven individuals and seized 77.5 kilos of cocaine in this bust. Operation Koetai also resulted in an increase in the cost per kilo of cocaine from \$3500 to \$7000 kilo on the Surinamese market. On the other hand, the inability of traffickers to transship cocaine out of Suriname in 2009 led to three-year lows in the cost of cocaine per 5/gram unit, and there was increased public concern about an anecdotal increase in local cocaine use, especially among youth.

The bulk of the cocaine movement out of Suriname to Europe and Africa is via commercial sea cargo. At present the government has no operating Coast Guard and has limited maritime capability to interdict drug traffickers at sea; however, the Minister of Defense remained committed to the formation of a new Coast Guard. The Joint Operations Center, a precursor to the Coast Guard, is operational. The Joint Operations Center includes the stakeholders that collaborate on joint maritime activities: Ministry of Defense; Ministry of Justice and Police; Ministry of Transportation, Communication, and Tourism (Maritime Authority of

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Suriname); Attorney General's Office; Ministry of Finance (Customs); and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fisheries. The GOS purchased two new boats for maritime operations, one of which was delivered and became operational in 2009. There is no GOS radar for tracking movements at sea.

The use of foodstuffs to move narcotics out of Suriname through the JAP Airport continued, with cocaine discovered in chocolates, cassava bread, chili peppers, beer and coconut milk cans, among other food items. The trend of Surinamese performance groups trafficking narcotics to the Netherlands also continued in 2009, and reaction by the Dutch government led to the banning of members of one performance group from entry to the Netherlands for three years. Cocaine was hidden in parts of planes bound for the Netherlands, although sometimes the cocaine was not offloaded and was confiscated upon the aircraft's return to Suriname. The media reported that this practice could, in some cases, have resulted in life-threatening situations for passengers and crew. The 2008 trend of African nationals arrested in Suriname continued in 2009, carrying narcotics intended for Africa (transported via the Netherlands). The Philippines Drug Council announced that Nigerian drug organizations were using Filipinos to traffick drugs out of Suriname. Nationalities arrested in Suriname in 2009 for drug-related offenses included Filipinos, Spaniards, Dutch, Belgians, British, Brazilians, Ghanaians, Colombians, Venezuelans, and Nigerians.

As of October 2009, GOS law enforcement agencies arrested 49 drug couriers who had ingested cocaine pellets. In 2009, law enforcement officials noted a continued decrease in the number of drug mules arrested from 99 in 2007, to 66 in 2008, to 49 in 2009. One Surinamese drug mule was arrested at the airport in the Netherlands after having swallowed 182 cocaine capsules, weighing nearly 2.2 kilograms. In June 2008, the GOS stepped up its enforcement efforts at the JAP airport by installing luggage scanning

equipment. In 2009, the GOS installed a urine testing machine at the airport to more easily identify suspected drug mules. In 2009, three dogs were trained by the Dutch to identify narcotics at the airport. Drug mules who evaded detection in Suriname were subsequently arrested at the airport in Amsterdam, which, in 2004, implemented a 100 percent inspection of all passengers and baggage arriving on all inbound flights from Suriname. Although the majority of the narcotics trafficking out of Suriname via the airport occurs mainly on the Netherlands-bound flights, drugs were also intercepted on U.S.-bound flights in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and the United States. For example, drugs were discovered on a U.S.-bound Surinam Airways flight during U.S. customs procedures in Aruba.

Corruption. As a matter of policy, no senior GOS official, nor the GOS, encourages or facilitates illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs, and does not discourage the investigation or prosecution of such acts. Public corruption by military and police who were possibly influenced and infiltrated by narcotraffickers is believed to have played some role in limiting the number of seizures made compared to the amount of illegal narcotics that is reportedly flowing through Suriname. Public corruption also appears to affect the prison system, where there are continued claims by non-governmental organizations of drug use and drug sales. Two family members of a government official were arrested in 2009 for smuggling drugs into a prison. Media reports and rumors of money laundering, drug trafficking, and associated criminal activity involving current and former government and military officials continue to circulate. There were ten arrests of government officials in drug-related cases as of October 30, 2009. Several police officers were prosecuted for drug-related offenses. Public officials arrested for narcotics-related corruption are prosecuted under corruption laws; there is no specialized legislation for narcotics-related corruption.

The GOS demonstrated a willingness in 2009 to undertake law enforcement and legal measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish public corruption. In the highest profile case of the year, 93 kilos of cocaine went missing from the vault at the Arrest Team's headquarters. Several GOS senior officials, including the Vice President and the Minister of Justice and Police, made immediate public statements on the case, characterizing the matter as serious. Members of the special units of the police were subjected to polygraph tests. The Personnel Investigation Department (OPZ) suspended members of the Arrest Team and conducted an investigation of the case. Members of the Arrest Team put on mandatory leave following the investigation threatened to sue the government for not following proper procedures, and the officers were transferred to other departments within the police corps. The

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Minister announced the command of the Arrest Team would be replaced. The OPZ concluded the internal investigation and submitted the report to the Attorney General's Office. The decision of that office on whether or not to prosecute was pending as of October 30, 2009. The Ministry of Justice and Police formally requested United States assistance in investigating the disappearance of the drugs and re-establishing the integrity of the Suriname Police Force.

In 2009, members of the anti-narcotics brigade arrested one of their colleagues in a drug raid. The OPZ completed the investigation into the 2008 killing by a police officer of another (off-duty) police officer, who had 51 kilos of cocaine in his vehicle. The case was forwarded to the Attorney General's Office, which decided to prosecute the police shooter. As of October 30, the police shooter had been released from custody pending the results of the ongoing trial.

Agreements and Treaties. Suriname is party to the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Suriname is also a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and has accordingly passed legislation that conforms to a majority of the Convention's articles, but it has failed to pass legislation complying with precursor chemical

control provisions.

Suriname is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling. Suriname is party to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and Migrant Smuggling and the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters but not the Optional Protocol thereto. Since 1976, the GOS has been sharing narcotics information with the Netherlands pursuant to a Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement. The two countries intensified their cooperation to fight drug trafficking with agreements between their police forces and their offices of the Attorney General. In August 1999, a comprehensive six-part, bilateral, maritime counternarcotics enforcement agreement was entered into with the U.S. The U.S.-Netherlands Extradition Treaty of 1904 is applicable to Suriname, but current Suriname law prohibits the extradition of its nationals. Suriname did, however, deport foreign national Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) members to Colombia in 2008 and is cooperating with regional counterparts on ongoing Drugs-for-Arms network investigations. In 2009, the Council of Ministers approved the draft legislation for Suriname to join the CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty and forwarded it to the State Council for review. During 2009, the U.S. made formal requests for assistance to Suriname. Suriname has worked with the in-country Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) office and has provided information and evidence to assist U.S. investigations and trials.

Officials from Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba met in June 2008. The three countries share intelligence on judicial and criminal matters and evaluated and expanded this cooperation. In May 2008, Suriname and Guyana made the "Nieuw Nickerie Declaration," to combat transnational crime between the countries. The declaration said they had agreed to advance cooperation regarding narcotics, money laundering, trafficking in persons and weapons. Suriname has also signed bilateral agreements to combat drug trafficking with neighboring countries Brazil, Venezuela and Colombia. Brazil and Colombia have cooperated with Suriname on specific drug-related cases. Suriname is an active member of CICAD, to which it reports regularly. Suriname publicly announced its candidacy for the CICAD vice chair position in 2009-2010 in late 2008. Suriname has signed agreements with the United States, Netherlands, Brazil, and France that permit law enforcement attach??s to work with local police.

Cultivation and Production. There is local cultivation of cannabis in Suriname but there is little data on the amount under cultivation or evidence that marijuana is exported in significant quantities. There has been MDMA production in Suriname in past years.

Drug Flow/Transit. Suriname's sparsely populated coastal region and isolated jungle interior, together with weak border controls and infrastructure, make narcotics detection and interdiction efforts difficult. USG analysis indicates that drug traffickers use very remote locations for delivery and temporary storage of narcotics. There are also indications that the illicit drug flights are increasingly moving to Guyana. Narcotics shipments are then transported by go-fast boat to Nickerie District, Suriname. Cocaine shipments that enter Suriname via small aircraft land on clandestine airstrips that are cut into the dense jungle interior and/or sparsely populated coastal districts. The GOS has worked to

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combat this flow by monitoring the illegal cross-border traffic near the city of Nieuw Nickerie and by destroying several clandestine airstrips in 2007 and 2008. European-produced MDMA is transported via commercial airline flights from the Netherlands to Suriname. There have been reports of marijuana smuggled into Suriname from Guyana, and heroin transshipped through Suriname en route to Europe.

Cocaine from South America, primarily destined for Europe, is transshipped through Suriname (sometimes via Africa or other South American countries). Cocaine bound for the Caribbean, and ultimately the United States, is also transshipped through Suriname. Drugs exit Suriname via numerous means including

commercial air flights, drug couriers, and concealed in small private planes. In 2009, Italian law enforcement dismantled a drug ring transshipping heroin and cocaine via Suriname and other South American countries to Italy. The majority of cocaine on commercial air flights is bound for Europe, but there have also been several cases of cocaine identified on U.S.-bound flights. The bulk of the cocaine movement out of Suriname to Europe and Africa is via commercial sea cargo. Traffickers move hundreds of kilograms, concealing it either in cargo, containers, or in the vessels. Small fishing vessels also carry drugs out to sea and transfer them to large freight vessels in international waters. Well-concealed cocaine is off-loaded at the destination port as legitimate cargo, while kilograms in block form, packaged in bundles of 50 to 100 kilograms, are off-loaded in international waters to smaller boats prior to entering port. The government has no operating Coast Guard or limited maritime capability to interdict drug traffickers at sea.

Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction. The NAR conducts annual activities surrounding the International Day of Drugs, with a specific focus on youth and at-risk groups. In 2009, this outreach included a film festival and other activities for youth. Special outreach was made to musical groups and brass bands after several cases of youth in performance groups being caught trafficking narcotics to the Netherlands. In 2008 the NAR established one new regional site in Saramacca for anti-drug activities, bringing the number of its active sites to three across the country. These sites were used as a base for data collection, analysis and recommendations based on trends, and drug awareness activities for the local communities. In 2006-2007, the NAR established a youth commission that conducts peer advising at fairs. In 2010, the NAR plans to continue to focus its efforts on raising drug awareness, creating self-help groups, and partnering with local stakeholders on youth and community outreach initiatives. The NAR is active with planning for a 2010 pilot program for a Drug Treatment Court, which would hear defendants with drug-use related crimes. There is one government detoxification center which is free; other treatment centers are run by non-governmental organizations.

The Bureau of Alcohol and Drugs (BAD) reported in mid-2009 an increase in cocaine use in Suriname but based this on anecdotal evidence. A 2007 CICAD-funded general population (household) survey's results were published in February 2009, and the data will be used to formulate new demand reduction policies. The survey, which measured alcohol, cigarette, and drug use in the general public, showed that the drugs of choice are alcohol and cigarettes, and that less than one percent of respondents had used cocaine in the month prior to the survey (except in the Districts of Commewijne and Marowijne, where the percentage was 1.3 percent).

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Policy Initiatives. The United States' focus is on strengthening the GOS law enforcement and judicial institutions and their capabilities to detect, interdict, and prosecute narcotics trafficking activities.

Bilateral Cooperation. In 2008, the GOS and Guyana made the "Nieuw Nickerie Declaration" to advance cooperation on transnational crime as a follow-on to the 2006 "Paramaribo Declaration," which provided a framework to establish an intelligence-sharing network, coordinate, and execute sting operations, destroy clandestine airstrips and tackle money laundering. In December 2008, the Ministry of Justice and Police co-hosted (with the Embassy of the Republic of France in Suriname) a regional counternarcotics and money laundering seminar for law enforcement and police attaches.

In 2009, the United States provided training and material support to several elements of the national police to strengthen their counternarcotics capabilities. The DEA office in Suriname provided counternarcotics training to several units of the Korps Politie

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Suriname (KPS), Suriname's national police force. DEA also arranged for some KPS officers to take part in a larger U.S.

military provided training course on interdiction, and provided operational assistance for the course. In 2009, DEA also provided technical assistance to the KPS in narcotics and money laundering and investigations. The "Paramaribo Declaration" set forth several tenants of understanding among the participating countries, and in 2009 the DEA took actions to enhance the cooperative actions between the participating countries. A DOD Tactical Analysis Team (TAT) became operational in Suriname in November 2008, providing additional technical support.

The Road Ahead. The United States encourages the GOS efforts to continue to pursue major narcotics traffickers and to dismantle their organizations, and to build on and strengthen its regional and international cooperation to date. The GOS should continue to strengthen its focus on port security, specifically seaports, which are seen as the primary conduits for large shipments of narcotics exiting Suriname. A concerted effort by the GOS to increase the number of police and military boats, and to create an operational Coast Guard, capable of patrolling the border rivers and coastal areas would also likely enhance counternarcotics efforts. Similarly, in order to achieve greater results, the USG encourages the GOS to continue to engage in capacity-building measures of its counternarcotics-focused units as well as to monitor and protect its porous borders and vast interior with a radar detection system and adequate air support. With regard to enhancing its interdiction at the principal airport and border crossings, the GOS should invest in a passport scanning/electronic database system.

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